

The Arts Economy in Clark County 2014

Clark County Arts Commission
and Arts of Clark County
Vancouver, Washington

July 2014



The Arts: Creating Jobs and Tax Revenue

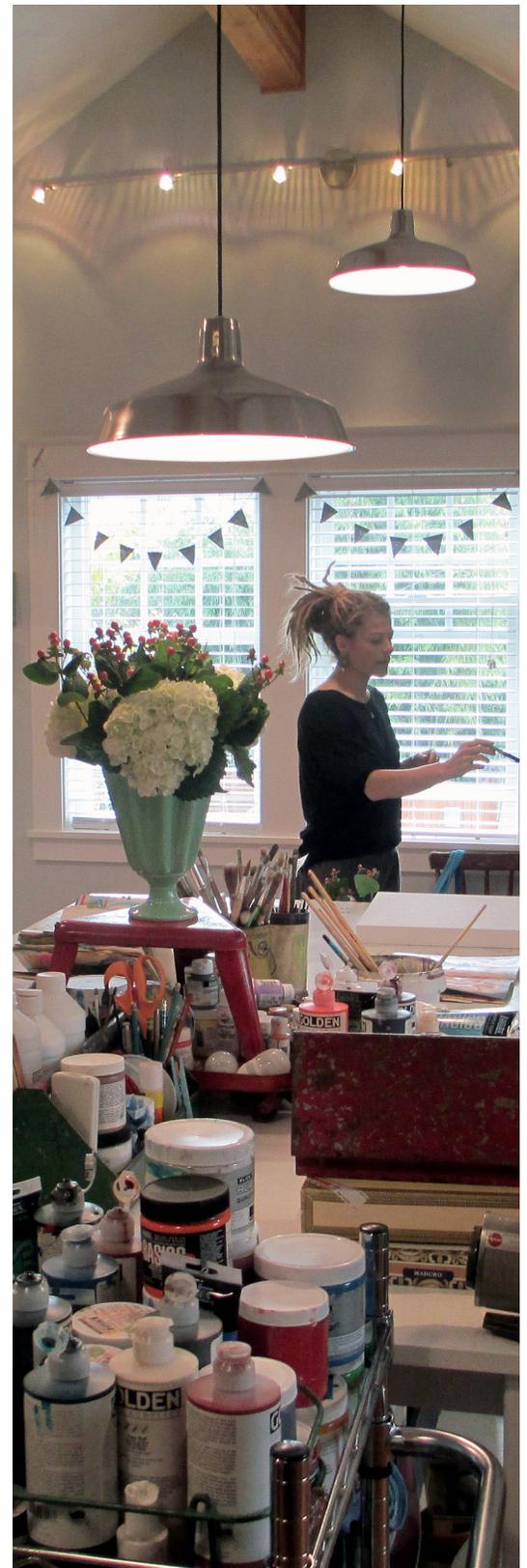
Clark County is on the northern bank of the Columbia River and is the southern most county in the state of Washington. We have eight incorporated cities and many neighborhoods with diverse populations. We have over 78 nonprofit arts organizations, many arts entrepreneurs, and numerous for-profit arts businesses. Clark County's arts industries support about 4,836 jobs with sales and revenues of \$54.5 million in 2012.

Arts of Clark County and the Clark County Arts Commission worked together in 2013 to use the Creative Vitality Index to capture a more complete picture of our creative economy and begin conversations about the arts economy with community leaders. We received a grant from ArtsWA (Washington State Arts Commission) and Art Works (National Endowment for the Arts) in 2013. We applied in 2014 and were again awarded the grant, enabling us to continue to make our case for including the arts in economic conversations using the CVI data.

What is the CVI?

The Creative Vitality Index measures the formal economy with the use of labor market data. It measures two major areas per capita: 1) sales and revenues of art related goods and services, and 2) jobs in the arts. Data is combined across the U.S. into one simplified indicator. This indicator, the CVI Value, shows how an area's creative economy stacks up against a baseline of 1.00. The baseline can represent the national average, or an average at the state, regional or local level. The CVI Value for Clark County is .563 as compared to the national baseline of 1.00.

We had the experience of mentoring both Spokane and Ellensburg in their CVI projects this year. Both cities have mature arts infrastructures and large university art scenes. Spokane County has a CVI of .78, and 7,000 creative jobs. Spokane City is the 2nd largest in the state, while Vancouver is the 5th largest, but since the CVI is on a per capita basis we can see that our creative vitality is lagging.



Artist Michelle Allen in her studio
Photo credit: Cameron Suttles

Creativity, Commerce and Open Studios

In October 2013 the *Creativity & Commerce* presentation of the 2011 CVI data at our historic Kiggins Theatre attracted over 250 people and opened doors for many other art related events. The popular semi-monthly production of *Hello Vancouver!* by Temple Lentz, and the Vancouver Symphony's Chamber Music Series are both hosted by the Kiggins Theatre. The Clark County bureau for Oregon Public Broadcasting was first discussed at *Creativity & Commerce*, and now an OPB reporter has been assigned to Clark County.

As a result of our involvement with the CVI, we are placing more deliberate focus on the economic impact of programs we initiate. In November 2013, we held our first Open Studios tour, featuring 50 artists located throughout the county. The preview reception attracted 750 visitors. Each studio had an average of approximately 100 visitors per day, many from out of the county. Each person typically visited about 8 to 10 studios and 38 of the artists reported combined gross sales of \$50,000. A number of artists also reported getting commissions for future work as a result of the tour. The 2014 Studio Tour is expected to attract an even larger audience.

CVI Summary - Sales and Revenue 2012

Creative economy sales and revenue figures in 2012 increased incrementally in almost all categories, as would be expected due to the county's population growth and the region's continuing economic recovery following the 2008 recession. Revenue from nonprofit arts organizations declined however, perhaps an indicator of the challenges we face in working with a fragmented or nonexistent arts infrastructure.

Independent artists, writers and performers sales increased 21% to \$25.2 million and became an even larger share of the overall market at 46%.

Clark County continues to stand out in per capita sales in the music store sales category with numbers 30% higher than the national baseline and 32% higher than the state baseline. As a testament to this, Beacock Music of Vancouver had the honor of winning the National Association of Music Merchants award for top music instrument and product retailer out of 4,000 independent music dealers.

The Kiggins Theatre: More than movies

The Vancouver Symphony's Chamber Music Series

concluded its season at the Kiggins Theatre with "Sunbreaks", an exciting concept that combined film with a remarkable score. This concert

brought the 1930 silent film *City Girl* to the big screen at the Kiggins with an original score conducted by composer John Paul, and featured four members of The Vancouver Symphony.

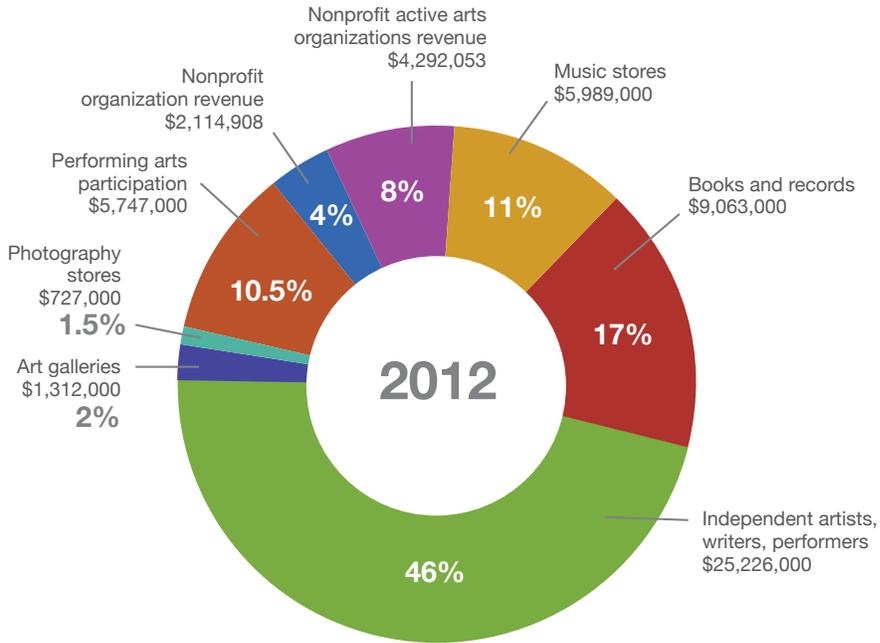
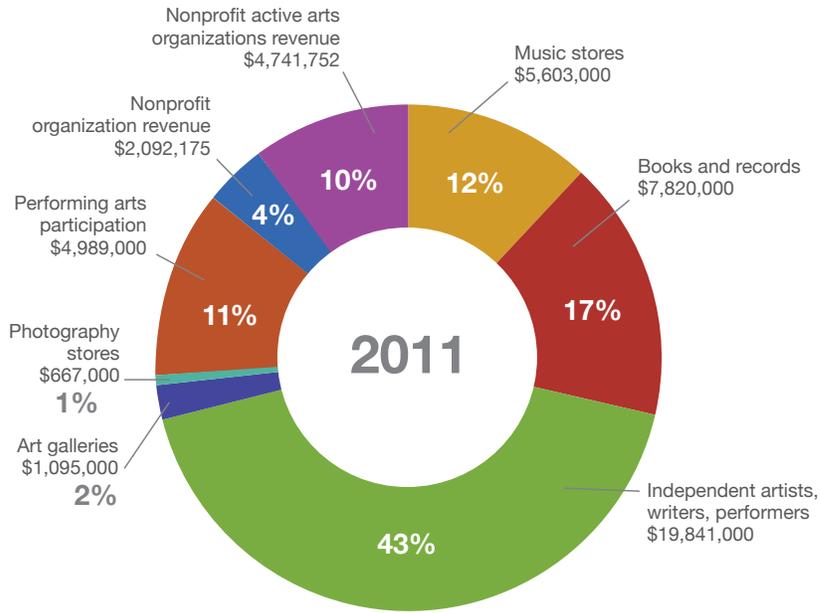


Photo credit: The Columbian

Hello Vancouver! is a live community talk show that bills itself as "A love note to this amazing place in the Southwest corner of Washington State."

The show, which has a variety show/late-night talk show format, features local bands, authors, artists, and organizations and is held at Vancouver's historic Kiggins Theatre. "We started *Hello Vancouver!* to re-build the public square, to bring people back together, to learn about and celebrate the diversity of experience and opportunity we have right here in our own backyard. And we try to have some fun while we do it!" said the show's host and producer, Temple Lentz.





Creative Vitality Index (CVI)
 Summary of Sales and Revenue
 Clark County, Washington

Creative Jobs/Population

Creative jobs increased with a rise in population from 2008 to 2011. And 2012 is the first year that the increased population didn't have an increase in creative jobs. Looking at the job gains in other sectors, it is possible that people are going back to previous employment after trying out entrepreneurial creative jobs during the recession.

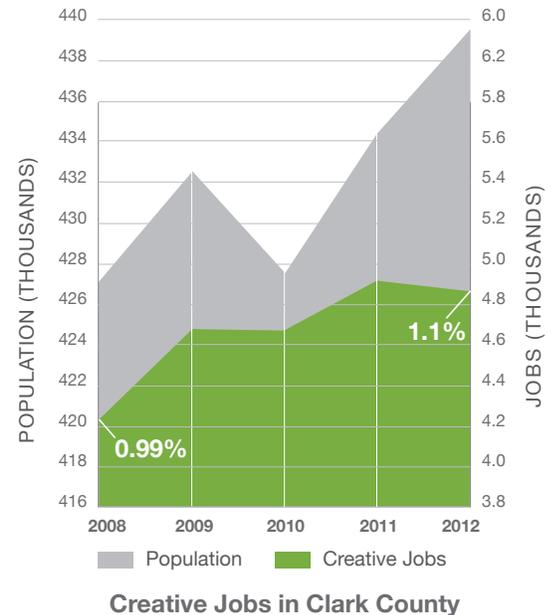
The Arts: Education Fosters Critical Thinking, Innovation

Michael Smith

In his seventeen years as an art teacher in the Woodland School District of Clark and Cowlitz Counties, artist Michael Smith has taught nearly every art medium. Students in grades 7 through 12 choose an elective in art and are able to pursue interests in drawing, painting, ceramics, glass fusing, printmaking, digital photography and art history and aesthetics. These courses translate into life-long enrichments and can lead to successful careers. Employers from leading industries and technology companies seek out and cultivate employees with developed creativity and problem-solving skills. Many of Michael's former students have come back as successfully employed adults in a variety of creative fields. As Michael says of his involvement in art making, "it is all part of 'building a base of culture' in our community. Educating individuals to appreciate art leads to a more involved and artfully refined population. An appreciative base builds upon itself."

Autumn Art Talks

The Autumn Art Talks in 2013 at North Bank Artists Community Project were focused on artistic development with speaker Gigi Rosenberg; art district development with Lynn Terry, the Portland Art Dealers Association; and local art history and contemporary art trends by Bonnie Laing Malcolmson, with the Portland Art Museum. Nearly 100 guests attended the Autumn Art Talks. The short term objective was to educate people from the community about local art trends and art professionalism, while encouraging greater viewership of art. These talks were supported with a grant from the Battle Ground Art Alliance, a nonprofit helping to foster connections in the arts community.



Michael Smith
Photo credit: Anni Becker

Poets in the Schools

With support from Washington State University Vancouver, Arts of Clark County and a Washington Humanities Spark Grant, Clark County Poet Laureate Christopher Luna started *Poets in the Schools*. Poet Toni Parkington discussed poetry history and how it's evolved with 9th graders at Ridgefield High School. "After giving them prompts," Toni said, "they got into it and had a blast." She also brought Christopher Luna to talk, and had a mini open mic so they could read their work. The kids sent handwritten thank yous with their poetry and drawings. The program was very rewarding for all involved. Christopher also held open mic and poetry workshops at WSUV and he gave talks and poetry readings in the community. He also created *Poets in the Shops* a community contest where 12 winning poems appear in posters in shop windows around Clark County following a reception at Angst Gallery in Vancouver.



Christopher Luna
Photo credit: Printed Matter Vancouver

The Arts: Sense of Place—Identity

In 2013 we brought our ideas and started a conversation about the creative economy with community leaders through the CVI report. We're forming our arts story as we urge the community to recognize the arts as an economic force. To succeed, we need a unified identity in this community. We need a place to make art and a place to perform local theatre without relying, as we have been, on our very busy high schools.

VOCA

Vancouver Organization for Contemporary Art (VOCA), a grassroots initiative, was launched by artists K.C. Madsen, Anne John and Cameron Suttles. In May 2013, VOCA rented 2,500 square feet of space in downtown Vancouver's industrial west end. With a limited budget and no paid staff, VOCA was able to host a wide variety of events, from art exhibitions to dance performances, theatrical and poetry readings, and arts seminars. Through social media promotion and word-of-mouth, VOCA was attracting and building audiences for arts groups across diverse art disciplines. In just under a year, until the building sold, VOCA's efforts had clearly demonstrated an unmet need.



Art Lab performance at VOCA
Photo credit: Cameron Suttles

Arts District

The City of Vancouver partnered with the Southwest Washington Art Galleries and the Vancouver Downtown Association to designate the Vancouver Arts District, which launched in May 2014. They acknowledged the work of arts organizations, and the benefits of First Friday Art Walks with this designation. They hope to grow attendance for all arts programming and to encourage culture friendly businesses to locate in the district.

The Arts: Quality of Life

The Clark County Commission on Aging's 2014 report indicates that by 2040, with a predicted population of 477,888, there will be more people in Clark County over age 60 than children under 15. The majority of these people want to stay in their own homes. Most caregivers are family members—of which over half are employed. The arts can play a significant role in ensuring the quality of life for our aging population. There are many studies that have shown the health benefits of creativity on senior adults. One such study summary stated that “the community-based cultural program for older adults appears to be reducing risk factors that drive the need for long term care.”¹ It's clear that the absence of an arts infrastructure in Clark County impacts not only kids, but adults of all ages as well.

This past year's experience has shown that Clark County needs dedicated community spaces to perform theatre, make art, have art conversations, poetry and book readings, as well as dance and music concerts. The VOCA space operated as proof of concept that there is demand for such facilities. The percentage of our population who would benefit from an investment in this kind of arts infrastructure is growing every year. Community investment in the arts supports jobs, generates tax revenue and advances our creative economy.



Vancouver Arts District signage
Photo credit: Cameron Suttles

1. *The Creativity and Aging Study: The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults*, National Endowment for the Arts, April 2006

Contributors

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